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FOR: THE TOBACCO INSTITUTE, INC.

File

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MACHINERY MAY SUPPLANT TRADITIONAL
HAND LABOR IN NATION'S TOBACCO LANDS

Washington -- Machines now under development may one day relieve the nation's 750,000 tobacco farms of the hand labor now required to "make a crop," says the current issue of Tobacco News, published by The Tobacco Institute, Inc.

Stephen E. Wrather, director of the Tobacco Division of the U.S. Agricultural Marketing Service, writes in Tobacco News that hand labor required in tobacco fields today is nearly the same as when tobacco-growing started in this country.

Tobacco demands from 300 to 500 man-hours of hand labor per acre, far more than any other field crop, he writes. Tobacco growers also find field labor increasingly hard to obtain.

Today, agricultural colleges at three tobacco-state universities are working on the mechanization problem. University of Kentucky researchers have developed a method of pelleting tiny tobacco seed in clay so they can be planted in the field by a mechanical planter.

A leaf-picking machine is being developed by the University of Connecticut for cigar-binder leaf grown in the Connecticut-Massachusetts area. At North Carolina State College, experiments are under way in bulk curing of packed leaves, a method which would eliminate the laborious stringing of leaves on a stick, the age-old method.

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